ONES awardee honored by Burroughs Wellcome

By Eddy Ball

NIEHS Outstanding New Environmental Scientist (ONES) awardee Vishal Vaidya, Ph.D., is one of six North American scientists selected to receive 2013 Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF) Innovation in Regulatory Science Awards.

Vaidya's research reaches across several biomedical specialties. Along with his other appointments, he also leads the Regulatory Sciences program in systems toxicology in the Harvard Program in Therapeutic Science. (http://hits.harvard.edu/about.html)
(Photo courtesy of Vishal Vaidya)

Vaidya
(http://www.vaidyalab.org/cv)
is an assistant professor of medicine and environmental health at Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health. He also directs the laboratory of kidney toxicology and regeneration in the renal division of Brigham and Women's Hospital, with a research emphasis on discovery and evaluation of biomarkers for early detection of kidney injury, and investigating the molecular mechanisms of kidney tissue repair.

With grant
(http://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=8181614&icde=10735315&ddparam=&ddvalue=&ddsub=)
support from his 2012 NIEHS ONES award (see story), his group currently studies fibrinogen signaling in kidney tissue repair. The BWF award will give Vaidya's group $100,000 per year, for the next five years, to map the biology of a toxic kidney cell. His goal is to advance regulatory science, by transforming kidney safety assessment using tools and technologies at the interface of quantitative systems pharmacology.

In a message to NIEHS and NTP Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., about the award, Vaidya credited NIEHS support with helping make the award a reality. "The ONES grant set the ball rolling for me two years back and now I am just having lot of fun in science."

In addition to his ONES award, Vaidya was the recipient of an NIH Pathway to Independence Award, from NIEHS, in 2007 (see story). He was also a summer intern at NIEHS during graduate school. Vaidya completed postdoctoral training in the renal division of Brigham and Women's Hospital, supported by a grant from the National Kidney Foundation, in 2005, prior to his faculty appointments at Harvard.

Vaidya is an active member of the Society of Toxicology (SOT) and the recipient of a number of SOT awards. In 2012, he received the group's American Scientist of Indian Origin Young Investigator Award.

According to the BWF website, the Innovation in Regulatory Science Awards
(http://www.bwfund.org/grant-programs/regulatory-science/innovation-regulatory-science/background)
provide up to $500,000, over five years, to academic investigators who are addressing research questions that will lead to innovation in regulatory science, with ultimate translation of those results into improving the regulatory process. These awards are intended to provide support for academic researchers developing new methodologies or innovative approaches in regulatory science that will ultimately inform the regulatory decisions the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and others make.

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